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Midrand, South Africa
27 April 1996

PRE-CONFERENCE MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

Held at the Gallagher Estate Conference Centre, Midrand
on 26 April 1996

Report by the Chairman of the Meeting

1. Opening of the Meeting and adoption of the agenda (item 1)

1. The pre-Conference Meeting of Senior Officials was opened on Friday, 26 April 1996, by Mr. Rubens Ricupero, Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

2. Mr. Abdul S. Minty, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Foreign Affairs (Multilateral Branch) of South Africa, made a brief statement of welcome to the participants in the Conference.

3. The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda circulated in TD(IX)/PCM/Misc.1.

2. Election of the Chairman (item 2)

4. The Meeting unanimously elected as its Chairman H.E. Mr. William Rossier (Switzerland), President of the Trade and Development Board.

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3. Procedural and organizational arrangements for the Conference (item 3)

(a) Inaugural Ceremony and high-level segment

5. The Meeting was informed that an Inaugural Ceremony, to be arranged by the host country authorities, would be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday, 27 April. The Ceremony would be addressed by H.E. Mr. Nelson Mandela, President of the Republic of South Africa, and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

6. Following the Inaugural Ceremony, at 3.45 p.m., there would be a Round Table discussion with Heads of State. Thereafter, commencing at 5.30 p.m., the high-level segment would conclude with a Round Table of Heads of International Agencies, presided over by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Full details of these events would appear in the Conference Journal of 26 April.

(b) Opening plenary meeting

7. The Meeting noted that, in accordance with rule 16 of the rules of procedure, the 240th (opening) plenary meeting would be formally opened on Saturday, 27 April, by the head of the delegation (Colombia) from which the President of the previous session had been elected. Accordingly, the meeting would be opened by H.E. Mr. Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia, President of the eighth session of the Conference.

(c) Election of the President (Item 2 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

8. The Meeting recommended to the Conference that H.E. Mr. Alec Erwin, Minister for Trade and Industry of South Africa, be elected President of the ninth session of the Conference by acclamation.

(d) Election of Vice-Presidents and the Rapporteur (Item 4 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

9. The Meeting noted that, in accordance with rule 22 of the rules of procedure, the Bureau of the Conference would consist of 35 members, comprising the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference, the Chairman of the Main Committee and the Rapporteur of the Conference. The Conference would need, therefore, to elect 32 Vice-Presidents.

10. The Meeting recommended to the Conference that the composition of its Bureau should be based on the same geographical distribution as that of the Bureau at its eighth session, i.e. seven members from Africa, seven from Asia, seven from Latin America and the Caribbean, nine from List B, four from List D, and China.

11. Accordingly, the Meeting recommended that the distribution of the posts of Vice-Presidents of the Conference should be as follows:

Group of 77

African Group:	Côte d'Ivoire
	Ethiopia
	Gabon
	Tunisia
	United Republic of Tanzania
	Zambia
Asian Group:	Bangladesh
	India
	Islamic Republic of Iran
	Jordan
	Philippines
	Republic of Korea
	Thailand
Latin American and Caribbean Group*:	Cuba
	Ecuador
	Jamaica
	Uruguay
	Venezuela
Group B:	Finland
	France
	Germany
	Japan
	Netherlands
	Turkey
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	United States of America
Group D:	Bulgaria
	Czech Republic
	Russian Federation
	Ukraine

China

12. With regard to the procedure for the election of the Officers of the Bureau and in order to expedite the work of the Conference, the Meeting

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* The Meeting noted that the Latin American and Caribbean Group would inform the President directly of the nomination for its seventh Vice-Presidential post.

recommended that the nominations made to these posts be communicated directly by the President of the Conference for their election, thus waiving rule 58 of the rules of procedure.

13. The Meeting noted that, pursuant to rule 22 of the rules of procedure, the President of the Conference, or in his absence a Vice-President designated by him, shall serve as Chairman of the Bureau of the Conference.

14. The Meeting also noted that, in accordance with the rotation of officers of the Conference, the Rapporteur of the Conference would be a representative of one of the States in List C - i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean - and that, following consultations, the Rapporteur would be one of the representatives of Chile. The Meeting approved this candidature.

15. In accordance with past practice, the Meeting recommended that the Chairmen of other sessional bodies, together with the coordinators of regional groups, be fully associated with the work of the Bureau of the Conference.

(e) Establishment of sessional bodies (Item 3 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

16. In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure and with the proposals put forward at the twelfth executive session of the Trade and Development Board, the Meeting noted that the Conference was to establish a Committee of the Whole to consider and report on the matters referred to it by the plenary. Under rule 63, the Committee of the Whole could set up such drafting groups as might be required, to consider and report to it on issues referred to them.

17. The Meeting accordingly recommended to the Conference that it establish a Committee of the Whole, which would be able to establish the required number of subsidiary bodies in the form of Drafting Groups.

18. Upon the proposal of the spokesman for Group B (Turkey), the Meeting recommended that H.E. Mr. William Rossier (Switzerland) be elected to the post of Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.

(f) General debate (Item 7 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

19. The Meeting noted that the general debate would be opened on Tuesday, 30 April 1996, and would continue until the list of speakers was exhausted, ending on Friday, 3 May.

20. In accordance with rule 39 of the rules of procedure and guidelines approved by the United Nations General Assembly, speakers in the general debate were requested to limit their interventions to a maximum of 10 minutes. To this end, delegations might consider making available the full text of their statements and concentrating on salient features during their interventions in the plenary. In accordance with past practice, the secretariat would reproduce the text of the statements made in the general debate, in the versions provided by the delegations.

(g) Allocation of items

21. The Meeting recommended that the general debate and all procedural and related matters be taken up in plenary (i.e. items 1 to 7 and 9 to 10), and that agenda item 8 be allocated to the Committee of the Whole.

22. In view of the fact that policy statements were to be made in the plenary, the Meeting proposed that the report of the Committee of the Whole would transmit to the plenary the action recommended by the Committee and its subgroups as a result of their deliberations.

23. As recommended by the Board at its twelfth executive session, the Meeting noted that Ministerial Round Tables would take place each morning at 9.30 a.m. prior to the plenary meetings (30 April to 3 May 1996). The specific themes for the Round Tables would be announced before each session in the Journal of the Conference.

(h) Credentials of representatives of the Conference
(Item 5 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

24. In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure and in keeping with past practice, the Pre-Conference Meeting recommended that the Credentials Committee be composed of the same nine States as were appointed by the General Assembly to serve on the Credentials Committee at its fiftieth session, i.e. Trinidad and Tobago (Chairman); China, Luxembourg, Mali, Marshall Islands, Russian Federation, South Africa, United States of America, and Venezuela.

25. Also in accordance with past practice, the Meeting recommended that, should any of the above States not be represented at the Conference, the regional group concerned be requested to nominate a replacement.

(i) Meetings facilities and timetable for the Conference

26. The Meeting agreed that the total meetings facilities would be distributed, as required, among the plenary, the Committee of the Whole and its Drafting Groups. Limited facilities would also be available on request for group meetings. Details of the official hours of the Conference and a tentative timetable were to be found in TD/365/Add.1. This timetable might have to be adjusted in the light of developments during the Conference. Up-to-date information would be published in the Conference Journal.

27. The Meeting noted that, for the purpose of facilitating the work of the Conference, a check-list of documents of the Conference had been circulated in TD(IX)/Misc.1. The Meeting's attention was also drawn to the note by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on control and limitation of documentation (A/AC.172/INF.15) and delegations were urged to keep requests for additional copies of documents to a minimum.

(j) Parallel events

28. Representatives of the UNCTAD secretariat outlined details of the main events that were being organized in parallel with the Conference, including

the Freedom Day celebrations in Pretoria (27 April), the Ministerial Round Table and the Round Table of Heads of International Agencies (27 April), the National Executive Symposium on Trade Efficiency (29 and 30 April), the Africa Connect gathering (2-4 May), and the four Ministerial round tables to be held each morning prior to the plenary (30 April-3 May).

(k) Format of the report of the Conference

29. The Pre-Conference Meeting recommended that the format of the report of the Conference on its ninth session would follow as appropriate that of the reports on its earlier sessions.

4. Report of the Meeting of Senior Officials to the Conference

30. The Meeting of Senior Officials authorized the Chairman of the Meeting to prepare a brief report on the recommendations agreed upon by the Meeting of Senior Officials, and to present his report to the Conference at its plenary meeting on 30 April.